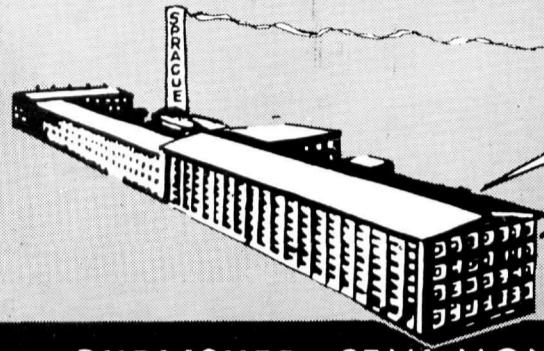


# SPRAGUE ELECTRIC



# LOG



PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY FOR EMPLOYEES OF SPRAGUE ELECTRIC COMPANY

Volume XIII

NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS, JUNE 8, 1951

Number 21



This seal will appear on every issue of the LOG for the rest of 1951 in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sprague Electric Company.

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS AT SPRAGUE ELECTRIC

Twenty-five years ago, Mr. Robert C. Sprague started the Sprague Specialties Company in Quincy, Massachusetts. Mr. Sprague, at that time an officer in the peacetime United States Navy, discovered while building occasional radio crystal and one-tube sets, that the tone of a radio could be changed by placing condensers of varying capacity across the loudspeaker. He perfected a device made up of a special condenser which could be adjusted for any one of seven capacity values, and which could be plugged in between the radio set and the loudspeaker, which were then separate units. Feeling that he had discovered something worth-while, the young inventor organized the Sprague Specialties Company, and proceeded to devote all of his spare time to the young business.

It is interesting to note that although the Sprague Electric Company, (the name of the company was changed in March, 1944) is regarded today as one of the world's leading manufacturers of radio condensers, or capacitors as they are now known, the original product manufactured was a tone control, not a condenser or capacitor. The design of a capacitor was only incidental to the manufacture of the tone control. The tone control required a special tapped capacitor not available on the market. A capacitor company was contacted to make them but failed to do so, and it was up to the Sprague Company to make their own capacitors. This lead to the development of the famous Sprague Midget Capacitor.

The young Company experienced its first failure when it found the tone control was difficult and expensive to sell as a commercial product. It was at this point that the importance of the "Midget" capacitor to the radio industry was realized. The Company,

(Continued on Page 2)

## Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Message

Twenty-five years ago, I stood on the threshold of a new and challenging venture. Since then, I have watched what was once just an idea, crystallize and become an actuality, far beyond any reasonable expectations at that time. It gives me a great thrill to look back over the years and see the process of growth and expansion which has been typical of our Company.

But change is characteristic of life. To remain stagnant is to be dead. It has been one of the chief assets of Sprague Electric and a contributing factor to its growth that we are always alert to adapt ourselves to new developments and trends. Our research department is constantly at work developing new products and improving the old. We strive to maintain a pliable organization which can adapt itself to changes, whether of an economic, political, or scientific nature. The continuing ability of the Sprague Electric Company to adapt itself to these changes will determine its success in the future, as it has in the past twenty-five years.

One of the most notable changes which I can see on this our anniversary year is the growth in the number of personnel. When we first moved to our present location, the number of employees was so small that I knew each one by name. This is, unfortunately, no longer possible, but I would like to take this opportunity to extend my greetings to each and every one of you. You are to be congratulated on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sprague Electric. Whatever success the Company has attained has, in a large part, been a measure of your loyalty and cooperation.

*R.C. Sprague*



Left:

Four of the six twenty-five year people gather around to cut the birthday cake at the Beaver Street cafeteria. They are William J. Nolan, Robert C. Sprague, Julian K. Sprague, and Mollie Avery. At the right of Miss Avery is Peter Horbal and, next to him, Lloyd King.

Right:

Three generations at Sprague Electric -- Robert C. Sprague, President of Sprague Electric, helps his grandson, Robert C. Sprague, III, to a piece of birthday cake. Bobby is aided by his father, Robert C. Sprague, Jr., Director of Employee Relations. Julian K. Sprague and Mollie Avery watch the operation.



ROBERT C. SPRAGUE  
PRESENTED WITH BIRTHDAY CAKES AT THE THREE NORTH ADAMS PLANTS

At ceremonies in the cafeterias of the three North Adams plants on June 1, Robert C. Sprague, President of Sprague Electric, was presented with birthday cakes in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sprague Electric Company.

Lloyd King, President of the ICW No. 2, gave Mr. Sprague a specially decorated birthday cake in behalf of the Brown Street employees. The presentation was made in the Brown Street cafeteria. After a short speech, Mr. Sprague cut the cake and served it to those present.

The Marshall Street cafeteria was the scene of another ceremony in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary. The birthday cake was presented to the President of Sprague Electric by Ray Bass, President of the IAM, in behalf of the employees at the Marshall Street plant. After the ceremony, the cake was enjoyed by the employees present.

At the Beaver Street plant, a third birthday cake was given to Mr. Sprague in behalf of the Beaver Street employees. Peter Horbal, President of the Office Workers' Union, made the presentation. Four of the six Sprague Electric people with twenty-five years of service with the Company were present at the celebration at Beaver Street. They were Robert C. Sprague, President, Julian K. Sprague, Vice-President in charge of Sales, William J. Nolan, Counsel, and Miss Mollie Avery, secretary to Mr. Robert C. Sprague, Harry Kalker, President of Sprague Products, and Samuel Darmstader, Sprague Electric sales representative in Chicago, also will observe their twenty-fifth anniversary with Sprague Electric this year.

Harry P. Bridge, of the Sprague Electric advertising department, came from Philadelphia to attend the ceremony. Mr. Bridge has been with Sprague Electric for eighteen years.

In a short talk in honor of the occasion, Mr. Sprague recalled an amusing incident which took place when he appeared before the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives as President of RTMA. Also, he expressed personal satisfaction that Sprague Electric was able to help the business conditions in North Adams when the business moved here from Quincy. At that time, many of the local industries were closing down and it was fortunate that Sprague Electric could take up some of the slack in business. Mr. Sprague thanked all the employees for their share in the growth of the Company and their cooperation through the years.

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"Every Sprague Employee an Assistant Reporter"

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## Twenty-Five Years of Progress at Sprague Electric

Continued from page 1

therefore, turned to the production of these capacitors and began to sell them in December, 1926. The product was well received by radio manufacturers as it was a compact unit of stated capacity, extremely reliable, and easy to install. It was also a relatively inexpensive product compared with the micro capacitors then in general use.

The development work on the original Tone Control was done in the Sprague home in Quincy, Massachusetts. Miss Avery did her typing on the Sprague dining room table, and Mrs. Robert C. Sprague helped by handling telephone calls and mailing orders. Mr. Sprague was kept busy in his spare time experimenting, developing the product, and trying to convince friends to invest their money in the small manufacturing company. Soon the concern moved, first to 1380 Hancock Street, Quincy, then to larger quarters in the Aywon Storage Battery Company on Washington Street. Another move was made in order to gain more space, and to 1511 Hancock Street, Quincy.

Julian K. Sprague, who joined the Company shortly after it was organized, contributed substantially to the development of the Midget capacitors and supervised manufacturing. In 1926, Harry Kalker came in as the salesman in New York City, and later the same year, Sam Darmstader as the salesman in Chicago. In 1929, Carleton Shugg, a classmate of Mr. Sprague's at the U. S. Naval Academy, joined the company as Factory Manager, and Preston Robinson became Chief Engineer. At that time, three years after its start, the Company employed about 500 people.

In 1929, it was decided to make electrolytic capacitors. A complete engineering staff was recruited under the direction of Dr. Robinson, and they immediately began to develop capacitors of a fundamentally new design which were smaller, better, and cheaper. The result was Sprague's first wet electrolytic capacitor.

With the Company growing by leaps and bounds and developing new products, it was obvious that the Quincy location was no longer adequate. Middleboro, Lawrence, Lowell, and North Adams were considered as

possible sites for the rapidly expanding company. North Adams was chosen after considering its location, factory facilities, labor supply, electric power, and transportation facilities, and, particularly, because of financial assistance given to the young company by the citizens of North Adams, its four local banks, and the North Adams Industrial Company. A sentimental factor also entered into it, as Mr. Sprague's father, Mr. Frank J. Sprague, had lived and gone to school in North Adams when he was a boy. In May of 1930, the Company had completed the move to the present Beaver Street plant and production was started in North Adams.

The Sprague Electric Company then went through a very difficult period. The move, the failure of the Visivox, a home talking picture machine, developed, manufactured and marketed by the Company, and the continuing business depression resulted in a very serious situation. But satisfactory arrangements were finally made and the Company was able to continue production through the cooperation of its banks and creditors. The dark days were weathered and the large debts were finally paid off by November, 1937.

The development of new products was then accelerated and more departments added. In the meantime, in 1933, Harry Kalker had set up the Sprague Products Company to distribute Sprague capacitors to jobbers and to the retail trade.

The Company continued to grow and soon additional space was needed for its operations. In February 1937, the Brown Street plant in North Adams was purchased. Production was started at Brown Street in June, 1940. There, products were manufactured for military use, including, with the help of the Wall-Streeter Shoe Company, civilian-type and military type gas masks. However, still more space was needed and in December, 1944 the Company purchased the Marshall Street plant after leasing some space there for the previous year.

At the present time, the Sprague Electric Company employs about 3500 people in its three North Adams plants, and 4500 people in all its plants. The Company also has an operation in

Barre, Vermont, which is being operated for it by the Rock of Ages Corporation of that city; and a branch plant in Nashua, New Hampshire, which was started in April, 1948. The Herle Corporation is a subsidiary located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was purchased in March, 1948. In addition, the Company operates a small plant in Saugerties, New York and is setting up another plant in Bennington, Vermont. The operation in Saugerties is a joint venture of the Sprague Electric Company and Philips Industries, Inc.

The Sprague Electric Company has become a large and intricate organization. The duties which were once carried out by a handful of people in one room, now are the problems of hundreds of people, three plants in North Adams plus several branch plants and subsidiaries. Sprague Electric has been a constantly growing organization which has adapted itself to many changes. It has always strived to maintain an alert and forward-looking policy. As we look back over the history of the company, we feel sure that the past twenty-five years of growth and progress are indicative of the future.

## Ceremonies In Cafeterias of the Three North Adams Plants Honoring Twenty-Fifth Anniversary



Left: Lloyd King, President of ICW No. 2, presents Robert C. Sprague with a birthday cake in honor of the anniversary. This presentation took place in the Brown Street cafeteria and was made in behalf of the Brown Street employees. Peter Horbal looks on.



Right: At the Marshall Street cafeteria, Mr. Sprague receives a cake from Ray Bass, President of the IAM. Ray presented the cake on behalf of the Marshall Street employees. Peter Horbal and Lloyd King were present at the ceremony.



Left: Mr. Sprague is congratulated on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sprague Electric Company by Peter Horbal, President of the Office Workers Union. Lloyd King is at the extreme right. This picture was taken at the Beaver Street observance.

## Decision of Sprague Specialties to Move to North Adams Heralded as "Important New Industrial Development" in 1929 Transcript

When the Sprague Specialties Company decided to move from its Quincy location to North Adams, the October 3, 1929 issue of the North Adams Transcript described the young concern as "the most important new industrial development North Adams has seen in a generation". The headlines read "Sprague Specialties Company of Quincy, Mass., Manufacturing Electrical Condensers, Selects North Adams in Which to Expand 3 Year Old Enterprise with Remarkable Record of Growth". The Transcript article went on to predict that eventually the Company might employ as many as 1000 people. At the present time, about twenty-two years after this prophecy was made, Sprague Electric has grown to such an extent that approximately 3500 people are employed in the three North Adams plants.

The Chamber of Commerce, the North Adams Industrial Company, and the North Adams Credit Guarantee

Association united their efforts in order to convince the Sprague brothers to locate their progressive organization in North Adams. The Transcript pointed out that George A. Hastings, President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Company, was very active in bringing the Sprague Specialties Company here. Mr. Robert C. Sprague came to North Adams as a guest of the Chamber of Commerce in order to look over possible sites for the industry. The Hoosac Worsted Mills and the Beaver Mills were among those considered. But Mr. Sprague had viewed more desirable locations and he went back to Quincy from his visit feeling that North Adams would not be satisfactory. However, the local businessmen were not to be defeated this easily and they convinced Mr. Sprague to reconsider this area. He did, and the Beaver Mills were selected to be the home of the Sprague Specialties Company.

# Twenty-Five Years OF SERVICE AT SPRAGUE ELECTRIC



*Anniversary*  
1926-1951



*Anniversary*  
1926-1951



JULIAN K. SPRAGUE

Julian Sprague, brother of the President of Sprague Electric, joined the Sprague Specialties Company of Quincy, Massachusetts in 1926. He helped design and manufacture the original Midget condenser and for four years was the Plant Manager at Quincy. Mr. Sprague is a Director and Vice-President of the Company.

ROBERT C. SPRAGUE

The President of the Sprague Electric Company graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1920, and did post-graduate work at M.I.T. in Naval Architecture. While in the Navy, Mr. Sprague was assigned to the construction corps and helped build the original aircraft carrier U.S.S. "LEXINGTON". In 1928, he left the service in order to devote all of his time to the Company.

MOLLIE AVERY

Miss Mollie Avery, secretary to Mr. Robert C. Sprague, came to work at Sprague Electric when it was a small enterprise which carried on its business in Mr. Sprague's Quincy home. For a short time previous to this, she had a position with the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation of Quincy, Massachusetts.



WILLIAM J. NOLAN

Mr. Nolan is a graduate of the Yale Law School. During World War I, he served as an officer in the Navy, and took up the practice of law in Boston after his release from active service. He is one of the original stockholders of the Sprague Specialties Company, and has been its attorney, secretary, and a director since 1926.



*Anniversary*



*Anniversary*

# Twenty-Five Years OF SERVICE AT SPRAGUE ELECTRIC



HARRY KALKER

The President of Sprague Products was sales representative for the Sprague Specialties Company in New York City up to 1930. In 1930, Mr. Kalker took over the job of sales manager for the International Resistance Company. Three years later, he formed the Sprague Products Company which was purchased by Sprague Electric in 1946.



SAMUEL B. DARMSTADER

Mr. Darmstader, Chicago sales representative, and one of the Company's top representatives, sold Sweetheart soap for the Manhattan Soap Company for eighteen years before coming to Sprague Electric. He considers Sunday the longest day in the week because it is the day on which he can't sell Sprague Electric capacitors.

## FRANK J. SPRAGUE, FATHER OF SPRAGUE BROTHERS, FAMOUS INVENTOR IN ELECTRICAL FIELD



FRANK J. SPRAGUE

Frank J. Sprague, father of Robert C. and Julian K. Sprague, was world famous for his developments in the electrical field. He was generally known as the "Father of Electric Traction". For a short period, he worked with Thomas Edison. He made important inventions for the trolley car, the electric elevator, invented the multiple-unit train control system, and an automatic railway signal and safety system. These are just some of the highlights of his distinguished career.

In 1881, Mr. Sprague worked out some of the principles which were later applied to the earliest systems for the distribution of electric power. He served on the staff of the famous inventor, Thomas A. Edison, but left in 1884 to form his own company. This company developed an electric motor which attracted a great deal of attention at the American Exposition held in Philadelphia.

Frank J. Sprague began the installation of electric street car systems in St. Joseph, Missouri and Richmond,

Virginia. When completed, the electric street car system in Richmond was the first in the United States. He then formed the Sprague Electric Elevator Company. Next, he developed a multiple unit system of electric train control by which several cars could be combined in a train and guided by one operator. This was an important step in electrical development as it made the surface car, the electric elevator, and the electric subway train possible. He had by no means exhausted his ingenuity for he later developed a system of automatic signal and brake control by which a train could be halted after it ran past a block signal. During World War I, Mr. Sprague contributed to the development of fuzes and aerial and naval depth bombs.

The talented inventor also established the Sprague Electric Company (no connection with present company of the same name) which was absorbed by General Electric in 1903. Also, he later served as a consulting engineer for the General Electric Company.

At the time of the move to the Beaver Mills by the Sprague Specialties Company, Frank J. Sprague was the head of the Sprague Safety Control and Signal Corporation. He also was busy organizing a new firm, Sprague Signs, Inc. to develop his most recent idea which involved a new principle of outdoor advertising.

As a boy, Frank J. Sprague lived in North Adams. After his mother died young Frank was sent to this city by his father to live with his aunt, Mrs. Anna Parker, whose home was at the corner of Wesleyan and Eagle Streets. He was an appointee from this district to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis.

It is of considerable local interest that his grandfather, Joshua Sprague, a carpenter and builder, came here to North Adams from Wardsboro, Vermont in 1836 with his wife, Betsy, and their 10 children, including Frank

Sprague's father, David Cummings Sprague, who was three years old at the time.

In 1884, two of Joshua Sprague's daughters, Martha L. Sprague and Betsy Sprague, were members of the first class graduating from Drury Academy, now Drury High School.

So when the Sprague Specialties Company moved from Quincy, Massachusetts to this city, it was to an area familiar with the Sprague name for almost 100 years.

### Sprague Products Company Performs Important Function of Handling Sales To Distributors

The Sprague Products Company performs the very important function of handling the wholesale sales section for the Sprague Electric Company. When Sprague Products was organized by Harry Kalker in July, 1933, it took over the job of distributing Sprague Electric capacitors to the replacement parts industry.

About six hundred distributors buy goods from the Sprague Products Company. The distributors, in turn, sell to retailers, such as radio dealers, electrical dealers and to radio and electrical servicemen. These distributors, who are located throughout the country, average four or five salesmen at work selling Sprague Electric products to over seventy thousand dealers and servicemen. As Sprague Electric only sells directly to manufacturers, Sprague Products fills in by not only servicing radio and electrical equipment through distributors, but, through its network of salesmen and advertising, interests new buyers in Sprague Electric goods.

The distributors to whom Sprague Products sells and who cover the North Adams area are the Pittsfield Radio

Company in Pittsfield, the Frank Cushing Company in Springfield, Fort Orange Radio in Albany, Hatry and Young in Springfield and Springfield Radio of Holyoke. These distributors then sell to retailers, such as Noels, Central Radio, Seasons, Belding, Briggs, Wilsons and others. When any of your radio and electrical equipment is not functioning properly, you take it to the repair shop and the chances are that a part made at Sprague Electric, and sold to a distributor by Sprague Products, and sold by the distributor to the repair shop, will fix up your broken radio, refrigerator, or television set.

Advertising is an important factor in selling goods. Sprague Products contacts its market by advertising in radio and electrical trade publications which are read by dealers and distributors. This is in contrast to Sprague Electric advertising done in technical magazines which would be read by electronic manufacturers.

When the Sprague Products Company was first organized, Mrs. Denoyan and Harry Kalker were the only employees. Then, the annual sales was one-twentieth of what it is today. The Sprague Electric Company bought the Sprague Products Company in June, 1946, and Sprague Products is now a wholly-owned subsidiary. The Company has grown a great deal since its organization. It now has a shipping department where twenty-five people are employed in packaging the products in an attractive manner and filling distributors' orders. Thirty-one people are employed in the office.

Harry Kalker, President of Sprague Products, observes his twenty-fifth anniversary at Sprague Electric this year. Before the formation of the Sprague Products Company, Mr. Kalker was the first sales representative for the Sprague Specialties Company (early name of the Sprague Electric Company), starting in July, 1926 in New York City. Congratulations to Mr. Kalker on his twenty-fifth anniversary, and to the Sprague Products Company for the fine job which they do of distributing products manufactured by Sprague Electric.

**Harry Kalker  
New President of  
Radio's  
"Old Timers"**



"Meet a man older than Methuselah — the new president of the Radio 'Old Timers Club'." These were Harry Kalker's words of greeting to Mr. R. C. Sprague in Chicago on May 20, when he returned to the Sprague Electric Headquarters during the annual Radio Parts and Electronic Equipment Show, to announce that he had been elected president of the Radio "Old Timers Club" for 1951-1952. Shown congratulating Mr. Kalker is Samuel Darmstader, Sprague Electric sales representative in Chicago, who will celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary with the Company this September.

The "Old Timers Club" is a group of fun-loving radio men who have been connected with the radio industry for twenty years or more.

## WHAT WE PRODUCE



Constant research keeps us abreast in the Electronic field.

The Sprague Electric Company is one of the leading manufacturers of electrical and electronic component parts. We manufacture capacitors of many basic types which are made to thousands of different specifications for a great variety of uses. In 1950, over 10,000 different types of components were made by the Company.

Sprague Electric is the chief manufacturer of capacitors for television sets. Besides capacitors which are used in electronic and electrical equipment, we make such things as hearing-aid batteries, noise suppression filters, high voltage pulse networks, high temperature ceramic coated wire, and capacitor analyzers.

### Products Used In Military Equipment

Many of the products manufactured by Sprague Electric are used in important military equipment. Ceramic coated copper wire is used by the armed forces in many important military projects. This specially treated copper wire also finds use as magnet wire in coils, transformers, chokes, motors, and other electrical equipment. The Miniature Metal Clad capacitor is em-

### Electrical Devices In Home Use Sprague Electric Equipment

Almost any of the electrical devices which you may have in your home could very possibly contain Sprague Electric equipment. You will find capacitors in your radio, television set, refrigerator, washing machine, electric mixer and vacuum cleaner. In your telephone, a capacitor is used to suppress an electrical arc which would interfere with your radio reception. In an automobile, capacitors are used in the horn, the clock, the radio, and the ignition system. Sprague Electric products can be found in fluorescent lights, electric typewriters, calculating machines, electric razors, X-ray machines, airplanes, trains, ships and geophysical equipment.



This picture was taken of a group from the Wet Electrolytic Assembly at the back of the Beaver Street plant some eighteen or nineteen years ago. At that time, Frank Gassett was Foreman and Leo Lemoine was the Assistant Foreman.

Front row, from left to right: Emma Massaloni Falcon (now employed in Paper Tubular Solder), William Falcon (General Maintenance), Rena Roy (Dry Tubular Assembly), Florence Leucy (Dry Tubular Assembly), Angie Mastriani (no longer employed here), Lena Simonelli (Paper Tubular Solder), Delta Sullivan Keating (Paper Ignition Assembly), Dilbert Tolken (no longer employed here), Florence Bernardi (no longer employed here), Leo Lemoine (Filters), Evelyn Ledger (no longer employed here), John O'Connell (Foreman of Paper Tubulars and Molding Department), Lottie Randall (no longer employed here), and Mary Merandi Daniels (Retail Sales).

Second row, from left to right: Joe DeGrenier (Foil Preparation), Henry Senecal (George's brother, but no longer employed here), Linda Dufraine (Tom's wife, but no longer employed here), Betty Fleury (Filters), and Mary Ashkar Mondia (F. P. Cover Assembly and Ovens).

Third row, from left to right: Domanic Spagnola and Max Deso, neither of whom are employed here now.

### SPRAGUE ELECTRIC COMPANY IN RELATION TO ITS COMMUNITY

In 1930, when the Sprague Specialties Company decided to locate in North Adams, the city was badly in need of a new industry. The whole country was suffering from a depression and the coming of a vigorous business to this area proved to be a decided help in relieving conditions here. About five hundred people were employed at the start, which helped substantially in lowering the unemployment figure.

### Able To Employ Many Of Former Arnold Print Works Employees

Again in 1942, Sprague Electric showed it could be of help to its community. The Arnold Print Works, which occupied the Marshall Street plant, liquidated and about eleven hundred people were left unemployed. Sprague Electric was able to absorb many of the former Arnold Print Works employees and so lessen the blow of the shut-down.

### Expansion Brings Increase In Employment

As the Company has grown and expanded, the number of its employees has greatly increased. Today, about seventy-six percent of the people employed at Sprague Electric reside in North Adams. Sprague Electric contributes substantially to the financial well-being of the area. Last year, about ten million dollars were paid out in wages and salaries to employees in return for their services.

### Products Sent To All Parts Of Globe

Products manufactured by Sprague Electric are sent to all parts of the United States and exported to many foreign countries. In this way, the name of the Company and its home, North Adams, is carried to many parts of the world.

North Adams has always been cooperative and helpful to the Company. This area has proved to be a fine location for a growing industry, and Sprague Electric plans to continue to be a good place in which to work.

## Sprague Electric Awarded Army-Navy "E" Five Times For War Production



Robert C. Sprague receives Army-Navy "E" pennant on "Sprague Day".

The Sprague Electric Company was five times the recipient of the Army-Navy "E" Award for excellence in war production during World War II. Less than 5% of war plants were honored by this award.

Employees at Sprague Electric were first awarded an "E" on April 2, 1943. The presentation was a very colorful ceremony which included the Westover Field Band, Governor Saltonstall as a guest, and speeches by Army and Navy officers, as well as Company executives. Vincent Lopez played at the State Armory on the evening of "Sprague Day". The Company soon received its second "E" award, and in April, 1944 was presented with its third

award. The continued awarding of the "E" was made on a basis of quality as well as speed and quantity of work produced. The morale and cooperation in the Company also were factors which were considered.

Another Army-Navy "E" was received on October 28, 1944. Sprague Electric employees were still maintaining a high production of war materials. The fifth award, which added the fourth star to our "E" pennant, was presented in 1945. On September 26, 1945, a fifth star was added to the pennant. Sprague Electric was awarded the Bureau of Ordnance "E" for its work on the "VT-Fuze", a Navy secret weapon.

## SPRAGUE ELECTRIC'S PART IN WORLD WAR II

With the outbreak of war, Sprague Electric was called upon to manufacture goods to fill important military orders, and to fill them as soon as possible. It was necessary to increase the employment in order to meet the consumers' demands. Research was stepped-up so that our armed forces would be sure to have the benefit of the best in electronic equipment.

Capacitors played an important role in the war program. The following list gives an idea of the type of military equipment which required capacitors: Tank ignition systems, two-way radio tanks, battle cruiser has radio, plane and submarine detectors, airplane transceivers, portable radio sets used by parachute troops, phones and switchboards for headquarters dugouts, land mines exploded by remote radio control, radio beacons which guide bombers on the beam, airplanes have special magneto capacitors and must have

special capacitors masking out radio interference caused by motors that might distort important radio messages, motorcycle radio equipment, elaborate radio and detection apparatus for military headquarters, and super-power searchlights require capacitors in an intricate mechanism.

Sprague Electric did a great deal of work on the Proximity Fuze, which was used so effectively in the Battle of the Bulge and in the Pacific. The Company also played a vital part in the development of the Atomic Bomb.

The supplying of equipment to the military was one phase of the war program at Sprague Electric. Another phase of the war was the number of Sprague Electric employees who entered the service. Five hundred and fifty-one Sprague Electric employees entered the military forces. Of these, eighteen men gave their lives.



Standing beside the Company Stinson, Mr. Sprague seems to be anticipating a pleasant trip. This picture was taken early in the history of Sprague Electric.

**THERE WAS A TIME  
WHEN . . .**

The employees had clambakes in the summer at Mausert's pond.

Mr. Denoyan was able to pay each person individually. And it was cash, too, not a check.

Dances were held at Beaver Street during the lunch hour. The music was supplied by records played over the loudspeaker system.

Working at Sprague Electric was like a six-day bicycle race. When an order came in, everyone worked night and day to fill it. Work didn't stop until the order was filled, then everyone went home to relax until the next order came in.

The nurse was not only in charge of the dispensary, but her office was the employment office too.

The men and women in Wet Electrolytic Assembly wore white hats. Also, the women had to wear white smocks. The Wet Electrolytic Assembly was located where Pete Law's Department is now.

The LOG sponsored a weekly radio program which was "of the employees, by the employees, and for the employees and Friends of Sprague Specialties Company."

The operators had to wear rubber gloves when working with the capacitors.

The Company used to have Fore-ladies, as well as Foremen.

Christmas was celebrated by a big party held at the Armory.

All the lights had to be turned off during the lunch hour and the lights on the machines had to be turned off when the operator left for a moment in order to help keep the electricity bill down.

The sample lab, all the labs, and the offices were located on the third floor at Beaver Street.

Filters used to be the location of Anode Winding.

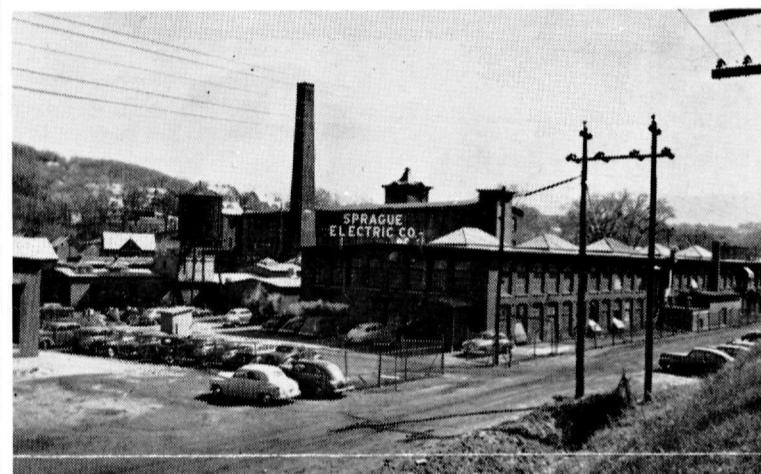
On the fourth floor at Beaver Street where Paper Assembly and the offices now are located used to be the site of a gym. The gym was called "Sprague's Club" and a dance was held there every Thursday night. The "Sprague's Club" was later the area used for the manufacture of the home talkies.

Mr. Martin's office was the employment office.

The Sprague Electric minstrel shows were held annually.

# EXPANSION THROUGH THE YEARS

**At the right is the house in Quincy where the Sprague Electric Company had its birth in 1926. The right side of this two-family house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Sprague and their small son, Robert, Jr. Mollie Avery, Mr. Sprague's secretary, lived nearby in the house which can be glimpsed in the very left of the picture. All the processes required in the manufacture of a capacitor were carried on in Mr. Sprague's home. Now these processes are carried on in three plants in North Adams by about 3500 people. In addition, the Company has a subsidiary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a branch plant in Nashua, New Hampshire, operates a small plant in Saugerties, New York as a joint venture with Philips Industries, Inc., has an operation in Barre, Vermont which is operated for it by the Rock of Ages Corporation, and is setting up another plant in Bennington, Vermont.**



BROWN STREET PLANT

## History of Brown Street Plant

The Brown Street plant was established in 1881 by Silvander Johnson and his associates as a gingham manufacturing plant. The 40,000 square-foot addition, known as building No. 4, was built and operated by the Hoosac Worsted Company. Across the street from the Brown Street plant, where the Northern Berkshire Gas Company is now located, was the site of a lake. This lake supplied the plant with water power and the area was called the "Factory Ground".

During the 1920's, the Arlington Mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts, carrying out a program of decentraliza-

tion, bought the plant and made many improvements. However, they soon tired of this small branch and after the flood of 1927, which did considerable damage to the buildings, the plant was closed.

The Brown Street plant remained idle until Sprague Electric, fired with the necessity of more space to carry on their business, purchased it in 1937. Sprague Electric made repairs in the plant, kept it idle for a year or two, and then, with the beginning of World War II, opened it in order to manufacture civilian and military-type gas masks.



BEAVER STREET PLANT

## History of Beaver Street Plant

The original building at the Beaver Street plant was constructed in the 1870's and is the one next to the river. As time went by, additional buildings were constructed, the last being added about 1900. The Beaver Mills were then operated and owned by Gallup and Houghton and cotton cloth was manufactured in the plant. Gallup and Houghton also owned, and were the chief executives of the whole Arnold Print Works system of mills. The Beaver Mills

were sold in 1908 to the Hoosac Cotton Mills, a corporation formed to operate both the Beaver and the Eclipse Mills, now known as the Hoosac Mills Corporation. At a later date, the Beaver Mills were sold and operated as a tire fabric manufacturing plant. The venture had a short life and after it closed down, the North Adams Industrial Company purchased the mill and interested Mr. Sprague in coming here from Quincy.



MARSHALL STREET PLANT

## History of Marshall Street Plant

The Marshall Street plant was started as a small textile printing plant about 1870. Business was prosperous and additional buildings were added rapidly over the years until the present size was obtained soon after 1900. The Arnold Print Works, with some changes in management, operated the plant until 1941, when it was liquidated and all the machinery was sold. Sprague Electric was expanding and leased three of the Print Works buildings for manufacturing and storage space. In 1943, Sprague Electric bought the whole plant and started an extensive

program of alterations and rehabilitation.

Among the repairs was included the restoration of the clock tower in 1945. This clock tower was installed about 1890. The clock is an unusual one in that it strikes on the quarter-hours as well as on the hours. This is done by two sets of bells. The clock strikes once at quarter past the hour, twice at thirty minutes past the hour, three times at forty-five minutes past the hour, and four times on the hour. It is one of the landmarks in North Adams.